

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 125072

EXDIS, FOR AMBASSADOR EILTS

E.O. 11652: XGDS 1 AND 2

TAGS: PEPR, PBOR, EG, IS, LE, UNSC

SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: SUPPORT OF UNIFIL
REF: STATE 123904

1. DURING YOUR DISCUSSION WITH SADAT ON OTHER ISSUES, WE
HOPE YOU CAN ALSO TAKE OPPORTUNITY TO OUTLINE OUR CONCERNS
RE SOUTH LEBANON SITUATION, THE DANGERS THAT UNIFIL MAY
UNRAVEL AND THE NEED FOR ALL PARTIES WITH POTENTIAL
INFLUENCE ON THE PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP TO DO WHAT THEY
CAN TO ENSURE PLO/FATAH COOPERATION WITH UNIFIL'S MANDATE.
YOU MAY DRAW ON CIRCULAR SEPTTEL RE U.S. STRATEGY BUT
SUGGEST YOU MAKE THE FOLLOWING MAJOR POINTS:

-- WE ARE PRESSING ISRAEL TO SET A FIRM DATE FOR FINAL
WITHDRAWAL AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE.

-- THE CHALLENGE THAT UNIFIL NOW FACES IN SOUTHERN
LEBANON IS FROM PALESTINIAN ELEMENTS, MAINLY REJECTIONISTS,

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WHO SEEK TO RE-INFILTRATE THE AREA EVACUATED BY ISRAEL AND
NOW IN UNIFIL HANDS AND WHO CHALLENGE UNIFIL FORCES IN THE
PERFORMANCE OF THEIR MANDATE.

-- WHILE SOME PALESTINIAN ELEMENTS ARE BEYOND THE PALE OF
REASON, WE BELIEVE THAT THE MAIN BODY OF THE PLO UNDER

ARAFAT IS CAPABLE OF RECOGNIZING WHAT IS AT STAKE AND OF BEHAVING RESPONSIBLY IF IMPORTANCE OF DOING SO IS BROUGHT HOME TO THEM BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.

-- UNIFIL'S FAILURE WOULD BE A MAJOR BLOW BOTH TO THE CONTRIBUTOR STATES AND TO THE UN. IT WOULD MAKE CONTRIBUTOR STATE FORCES LOOK INEFFECTIVE AND COULD CAST PERMANENT DISCREDIT ON UN PEACEKEEPING MACHINERY, NOT ONLY IN THE MIDDLE EAST CONTEXT BUT GENERALLY. IT COULD SET THE STAGE FOR RENEWED LARGE-SCALE VIOLENCE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON, WITH DANGER THAT SITUATION COULD DEGENERATE INTO ANOTHER FULL-SCALE ARAB-ISRAELI WAR.

-- WE RECOGNIZE THAT EGYPT DOES NOT NOW ENJOY A RELATIONSHIP WITH ARAFAT WHICH WOULD ALLOW EGYPTIAN INFLUENCE TO BE EXERTED DIRECTLY AND PROMPTLY. NEVERTHELESS, WE ARE SURE THE PLO LEADERSHIP CONTINUES TO REGARD SERIOUSLY THE EGYPTIAN POSITION AND EGYPTIAN ABILITY TO INFLUENCE MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS. WE HOPE THAT EGYPT WILL DO WHAT IT CAN TO PREVENT PLO FROM CHALLENGING UNIFIL.
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